2:Purcell G-4 (no date) 1951 AL1 Southeast Asia AL1
Chinese

361 immigration, are also the site of a large Chinese immigrant community. Burma and Siam exhibit similar contrasts within themselves: between the densely settled delta of the Irrawaddy and the almost uninhabited Northern Shan States (where the Bawdwin mines are located), the two focuses of Chinese settlement in Burma; in Siam, between the thickly populated Menam delta and the Isthmus of Kra, almost empty until the advent of the Chinese.[1] In central Siam the Chinese live closely associated with the Siamese people by whom, until recent decades, they were completely absorbed within a few generations. In Siam about half the Chinese live in the lower delta of the Menam, in the neighbourhood of Bangkok; the remainder of the race are scattered through the country, living in villages and towns rather than rural communities and tending to concentrate in the more commercialized districts. A notable concentration of Chinese, consisting of the more recent immigrants, is to the southwest of Siam, where they work in the mines, on the rubber plantations, and as merchants in the villages.

162 Apart from the concentration in the Kra Isthmus region, the chief occupations of the Chinese in Siam are the various forms of retail and wholesale trade. The Chinese, in fact, control most of the retail trade in the country. In particular they have the lion's share in the rice distribution and milling, and there is scarcely a commodity from pepper to sugar in which they are not interested as middlemen. They also make up a large part of the class of skilled craftsmen.

167 Most of the Chinese in Siam originally came from Hainan, Mei Hsien, and Chao Chou (including the city of Swatow) in east Kwangtung. The last-named group is apparently in the majority, especially those from Chin Hai, Yao P'ing, Chi Yang, and Chao An.

162 In Malaya the Chinese have a special significance in that they are here the majority community and have been so since before 1941. In that year there were for the whole of Malaya 2,379,000 Chinese as compared with 2,279,000 Malays, though, excluding Singapore, which is virtually a Chinese city, the Malays still outnumbered them. By 1947 they had still further strengthened their position so that they accounted for 2,615,000 of the population, whereas the Malays were now 2,544,000. This outnumbering of the native population (though the Malays themselves have multiplied their numbers several-fold within the last few decades by natural

[1] Unger, op. cit.

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953) 1956 AO7 Central Thai
Southeast Asia AL1

563 foreign army of occupation has preserved it from disruption.
565 The essential and distinctive character of a plural society
433 is that it is dominated by economic forces, and, outside a
591 few partly sheltered oases, Southeast Asia illustrates the capitalist system in its purest form.[18]

162 Another common feature is the dominance of the agri-
171 cultural section of the population. The latest available
433 figures show the percentage proportions of population dependent
171 on agriculture in the area as follows: Burma, 68; Indonesia, 66; Philippines, 69; Thailand, 85.[19] The same source indicates the proportions for various regions of the world as follows: North America, 20; Oceania, 30; Europe, 33; South America, 60; Asia, 70; and Africa, 74.

171 With the prevailing techniques of production and the
433 consequent low productivity per man, dominance of agriculture
434 means low per capita national income. When countries are grouped by level of economic development on the basis of per capita national income as of 1950, all the six countries of Southeast Asia -- Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya, Philippines, and Thailand -- fall in the underdeveloped
443 group.[20] Moreover, there is in Southeast Asia a true surplus
464 population on the land in the sense that even under the
161 present methods of cultivation a sizeable fraction of the

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18. Ibid., p. 77.

19. Food and Agriculture Organization, 1953 Yearbook, Vol. VII.

20. Eugene Staley, The Future of Underdeveloped Countries (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 16-17.